

How LAUSD Still Needs to Improve its LCAP to Provide Transparency, Accountability, and Equity

In July of this year, Public Advocates filed a complaint on behalf of LAUSD parents charging that the district violated the state's education funding law (LCFF) because it did not properly report or account for more than \$1 billion in state funds that were supposed to serve low-income students, English language learners and foster youth. As a result of the complaint and subsequent intervention by LACOE, LAUSD has amended its annual spending plan, known as the LCAP. The amended LCAP provides significantly more detailed description of services, reflection of effectiveness, and disaggregation of expenditures, *but many problems remain*. LAUSD is receiving feedback submitted [online](#) until September 17th at 5pm. The Board will be voting on the amended LCAP on September 24th. Here are some quick talking points:

OVERARCHING CONCERNS

- **Stop Undermining Equity and diverting as much as \$250 million or more from high-need student services:** High-need students of color in LAUSD generate \$1.14 billion in additional revenue that must be used on new and improved programs that benefit them and close the achievement gap (p. 1). However, the LCAP suggests that LAUSD uses most of its equity dollars on services for all students that are not targeted at high need students. For example, most assistant principals, counselors, nurses and librarians are provided districtwide based on overall enrollment, not equity needs. Also, the newly disclosed teacher salary and campus aide increases, as well as certain local district staff salaries have never been identified or justified in the LCAP (pp. 142-46). As a result, high need students are potentially losing \$250 million or more in targeted investments. We fully support teachers and school staff receiving well-deserved raises and a living wage, but these expenditures must come out of base funds. If that is not feasible, then cuts to central and local district administrative budgets, school police, and other base funds is necessary to create funding flexibility. In addition, the amended LCAP reveals apparent double counting of actions and services (i.e. Preschool Expansion is part of 1.5 and 2.9; Transition Services for TSP populations, Speech and Pathology Services for Preschool, and EL Master Plan Professional Development are both part of 1.5 and 2.9). This duplication also potentially undermines equity by tens of millions of dollars. ***Demand that LAUSD spend its equity dollars on increasing services for high need students above and beyond the general education program.***
- **Make All School Level Allocations Transparent:** LAUSD sends over half a billion a year in equity dollars to school sites but does a very poor job of showing either what all those funds are spent on or how those investments are principally serving high need students. In its amended LCAP, LAUSD does reference for the first time the ["School Allocations for Targeted Student Populations \(TSP\),"](#) which lists every school, their SENI rank and allocation, as well as a number of other school based allocations, such as arts, nurses, counselors, Class Size Reduction Teachers, and Librarians, among others (p. 145). All of the funding identified on this spreadsheet is generated by high need students and must be used to provide new or better services for their benefit. However, the document shows that some lowest need schools receive much greater allocations of resources than higher need schools. These allocations should not be funded using equity dollars. Also, hundreds of millions of other school allocation dollars are not disclosed on this spreadsheet, including, Diploma Counselors (1.8), School Innovation Funds (1.10), Targeted Student Supports (3.2), and most of the categories in the \$850 million School Autonomy action (1.5). ***Demand that all school level equity dollars be disclosed and demonstrated as serving high-need students to ignite transformation locally.***

- **Stop Combining Multiple, Unrelated Programs and Services into Mega-Actions That Prevent Transparency and Accountability:** LAUSD combines up to 23 separate, and often unrelated programs into a single action without providing disaggregated expenditures (i.e. 1.5 School Autonomy, 1.9 A-G Immediate Intervention Plan, 2.9 English Learner Supports, 3.2 Targeted Student Supports), which prevents stakeholders and the public from seeing how much money is spent on each program and whether it is an equitable and effective use of funds. Although the amended LCAP disaggregates much of the School Autonomy action, the other actions are unchanged. ***Demand that LAUSD unbundle its expenditures so community can hold it accountable for its spending plan.***
- **Provide a Meaningful Community Engagement Process:** LAUSD provided a woefully deficient LCAP to community stakeholders in May and June of 2019. After a legal complaint was filed and LACOE intervened, LAUSD amended its LCAP to provide significantly more detail and some substantial changes, such as a 60 percent reduction in English Learner Supports, integration of the School Innovation Funds with School Autonomy (and a net reduction in School Autonomy expenditures), and disclosure of hundreds of millions of dollars in previously unaccounted for spending. Yet, LAUSD refused to provide the families and community a meaningful opportunity to provide input. LAUSD posted its 274-page document (more than twice the length of its original) on its website at the end of the day on September 12th and will only take feedback until September 17th at 5pm. It is nearly impossible for the public to digest such a long document and provide feedback within a few days. Moreover, LAUSD convened the parent committees to provide input on the accessibility of the LCAP, but did not solicit substantive feedback or tell them about the online feedback process. ***Demand that LAUSD engage in a two-way dialogue with parents, students, and other community members.***

SPECIFIC SUBSTANTIVE CONCERNS

- **Stop LAUSD's Disinvestment in English Language Supports:** In 2018-19, LAUSD spent \$13.7 million less on English Learner Supports (2.9) than anticipated, without any explanation for this substantial reduction (pp. 77, 88-89). In the Amended LCAP, planned 2019-20 expenditures for English Learner Supports (2.9) were further reduced from \$19.5 million to \$7.8 million without explanation (pp. 195-96). This dramatic disinvestment in English Learners is particularly troubling when English Learner benchmarks are generally not met and disparities in graduation rates and college readiness persist for these children (pp. 125-27, 162-67). These paltry investments in English Learners are further diluted by the inclusion of unrelated activities, such as general LCAP support (i.e. fiscal specialists, compliance staff) that is not specifically directed to supporting English Learners in the classroom where they need assistance (pp. 191-95). ***Demand an immediate restoration of investments for English Learners Supports in LAUSD!***
- **Preserve School-Based Investments in Parent Engagement:** Last year, LAUSD spent \$4 million less than expected on parent engagement (pp. 101-02). The district claims that it shifted most of this money to School Autonomy (1.5) as part of SENI to provide flexibility for schools to engage parents (p. 104). However, the School Autonomy action does not provide a separate line item for investments in parent engagement (pp. 144-46). In fact, the only reference to actual investments in parent engagement under School Autonomy last year was a reference to campus aides and additional classified staff at elementary schools to “provide additional supervision and safety for students in addition to supporting parent and community engagement.” Parent engagement must happen at every grade level and include a wide variety of activities (p. 26). ***If you believe parental engagement is important, demand a separate line item under School Autonomy to protect these investments.***
- **Preserve School-Based Investments in Restorative Justice:** This year, LAUSD is proposing to shift \$8 million of its \$10 million in restorative justice resources (5.1) to School Autonomy (p. 228-29) to provide school sites more flexibility in staffing and implementation (p. 146). Although we support more local control of these resources, there is no separate line item for Restorative Justice under School Autonomy (pp. 142-46). To preserve investments in restorative justice, it is important to have transparency around school spending on these supports. ***Therefore, if you believe that restorative justice is crucial to creating a school climate conducive to learning for students of color and other high need students, demand a separate line item under School Autonomy to protect these investments.***